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Gov. Lynch Recognizes New Hampshire Auto & Truck Recyclers For Efforts to Remove Mercury from the Environment

Earth Day Event Marks 3,500 Mercury Switches Collected

CONCORD – Gov. John Lynch and state environmental officials today recognized the New Hampshire Auto & Truck Recyclers Association for their voluntary efforts to remove mercury from the environment.

Gov. Lynch, joined by Environmental Services Commissioner Michael Nolin, today recognized the NH Auto & Truck Recyclers Association (NHATRA) for their voluntary mercury switch removal program. Association members have already collected 3,500 mercury switches.

“I am pleased to recognize the work of the New Hampshire Auto and Truck Recyclers Association, whose members are voluntarily collecting mercury-containing switches from the hood and trunk lids of old vehicles to assure that toxic mercury is properly recycled and does not pollute our lakes and streams,” Gov. Lynch said.

“In New Hampshire, we are blessed with beautiful lakes and rivers. We shouldn’t have to warn our citizens against eating fish from those lakes and rivers. That is why we must keep working to reduce the amount of mercury in our environment, and this is one important part of that comprehensive state effort,” Gov. Lynch said.

Today’s Earth Day celebration highlighted the successful partnership between the Auto and Truck Recyclers Association and the New Hampshire Green Yards Program, which works with motor vehicle salvage yards to improve environmental practices and to bring them into compliance with exiting state and federal environmental requirements. The NH Green Yards Program provides education and compliance assistance to approximately 200 auto-recycling yards across New Hampshire.

“Today’s auto recycling yards can no longer operate like our grandfather’s. Dismantling modern vehicles for parts and scrap recycling is a sophisticated process that needs to be done in an environmentally sound manner,” Commissioner Nolin said.

MORE

Gov. Lynch and Commissioner Nolin and the staff of the department's New Hampshire Green Yards Program presented an award to Bob Phelps, vice president of the Auto and Truck Recyclers Association.

About the New Hampshire Green Yards Program:

- Approximately 500,00 vehicles in New Hampshire are over nine years old and will soon be recycled. (The average age of a vehicle in a salvage yard is seven to 10 years.)
- Cars are the #1 recycled product in the United States.
- Approximately 10 million vehicles are recycled annually in the North America.
- At least 95 percent of all cars scrapped in the U.S. are collected for reuse and recycling.
- In addition to mercury switches, the modern automobile contains many other toxic and hazardous components that we depend on the auto recycler to remove and properly recycle or dispose of. These materials include:
 - Lead acid batteries
 - Freon, Gasoline / Fuel
 - Motor Oil and other oil, including brake fluid, transmission fluid, etc.
 - Anti-freeze
 - Lead parts, such as wheel weights and battery cable ends
 - Air bag cartridges containing the chemical sodium azide (explosive / acutely toxic)
 - Additional mercury containing parts, such as ABS brake systems, HID headlamps, and backlighting for navigational/entertainment systems.

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